United Nations A/68/132

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 July 2013
English
Original: English/Spanish

Sixty-eighth session
Item 104 of the preliminary list*
Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Replies from Governments	3
	Malta	3
	Netherlands	5
	Spain	6

* A/68/50.

13-39147 (E) 190713 060813

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/75, commended the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity; encouraged them to strengthen such efforts through, inter alia, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region; and recognized the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security.

2. The General Assembly recognized that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles, as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area, would contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums.

3. The General Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that had not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the conditions necessary for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region. The Assembly encouraged all States of the region to favour the conditions necessary for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

4. The General Assembly encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society.

5. Furthermore, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

6. In this connection, a note verbale dated 25 February 2013 was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Malta

[Original: English]
[29 May 2013]

At its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/75, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

Malta fully supports initiatives which, directly or indirectly, strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. From the political perspective, Malta believes that regional initiatives such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Western Mediterranean Forum (5 plus 5 dialogue) provide important forums for the maintenance of dialogue among the Euro-Mediterranean countries at all levels. Such initiatives also promote project diplomacy and address cross-border issues. Malta's role in these initiatives takes the form of active participation in meetings and their organization as well as the provision of funds, expertise and other resources. Malta is a party to the major non-proliferation treaties and considers the United Nations and its treaty bodies as contributing towards global security and stability. Malta fully supports the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone and confidence-building measures in the region. From a more technical point of view, Malta has adopted a policy of transparency and submits regular reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

As a co-signatory of General Assembly resolution 67/75, Malta strongly subscribes to the necessity of taking further steps towards strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. As a small island State in the middle of the Mediterranean and a State member of the European Union, Malta continues to support the promulgation of a closer regional dialogue as a key to regional development, integration and security, as manifested in its continued support of regional organizations and initiatives such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Western Mediterranean Forum (5 plus 5 dialogue).

Regional developments over the past months have further underlined the relevance of the Union for the Mediterranean as a significant channel of communication between its 43 members. The Union remains a unique organization that brings a number of diverse actors in the region together at the same table. Malta has also consistently called for European Union (EU) support to the Union for the Mediterranean and has welcomed the assumption of EU as the northern co-Presidency.

While recognizing the necessity of keeping up a political dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the realization of concrete projects for the benefit of our citizens remains a priority. In this context, Malta has supported the secretariat in Barcelona by providing one of the Deputy Secretaries-General from 2010 until 2013. Malta will maintain its support of the Union for the Mediterranean by seconding Ambassador George Saliba as the Special Envoy of the secretariat.

Malta recognized at an early stage the relevance of "action-oriented cooperative dialogue" among the countries of the Mediterranean to greater security in the region, for the promotion of the economic and social development of the region's societies. In this regard, Malta welcomes the project diplomacy promoted

by the Union for the Mediterranean in areas such as renewable sources of energy, transport, higher education, gender equality and water governance.

Malta regularly contributes financially to the Anna Lindh Foundation — another channel for the promotion of intercultural exchange, dialogue and understanding among the States members of the Union for the Mediterranean — firm in its belief that effective international cooperation is invariably required to permeate from high-level politics to the grass-roots level.

The Western Mediterranean Forum (5 plus 5 dialogue), as a subregional initiative, continues to play a primary role in its contribution to regional cohesion and cooperation and as a complementary forum to wider organizations with the potential, as identified during the Second Malta Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Western Mediterranean Forum, held in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2012, as well as the tenth meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 5 plus 5 dialogue, held on 16 April 2013 in Nouakchott, to bring to fruition concrete projects in various areas contributing to the realization of the vision for a Mediterranean region of peace and prosperity for its citizens. All 10 countries (5 plus 5) are members of the Union for the Mediterranean, with Libya being an active observer in the wider forum. The 5 plus 5 dialogue is, in fact, increasingly considered as an incubator of ideas for the Union.

The Second Malta Summit reaffirmed the acknowledgement of the dialogue's relevance to the Mediterranean dimension as a practical instrument to develop synergies with regional cooperation frameworks and fund structures. The Summit was held after an interval of nine years and in the aftermath of the historic transformations that took place in the Middle East and North Africa. All 10 countries were represented at the highest level.

In the Malta Declaration adopted at the Second Summit, the opportunity was seized to build a new community based on common values and understanding that would influence future trends. Both the Declaration as well as the working sessions demonstrated the existence of a common agreement on the necessity to maintain the regularity of meetings at ministerial or expert level in the various dimensions of the 5 plus 5 dialogue, and to underline the importance of interface with other regional forums, notably the Union for the Mediterranean. The Malta Declaration also deals with regional security and stability. The 10 States members of the 5 plus 5 dialogue have agreed to engage more actively in regional security issues by boosting regional cooperation and confronting future challenges through a stronger neighbourhood. The Declaration makes a special reference to the fight against transnational terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking, especially with training activities, technology transfer, intelligence cooperation and development aid. Those issues fall under the remit of the Ministers of Interior Affairs of the 5 plus 5 dialogue, in which Malta has always been, and continues to be, an active participant.

Malta welcomes the fact that the Declaration adopted at the tenth meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Nouakchott in April 2013 reflects the Malta Declaration and follows on its recommendations.

The 5 plus 5 sectoral initiatives of interior affairs and defence are both very active and relevant to the contemporary Mediterranean situation. The Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security of Malta participated in the Fifteenth Conference of Ministers of Interior Affairs of the 5 plus 5 dialogue, held in Algiers

in April 2013. Malta is also an active participant in the 5 plus 5 defence initiative and hosted the meeting of Ministers of Defence of the 5 plus 5 dialogue in December 2010 (when the Presidency was passed on to Mauritania), having held the Presidency of the 5 plus 5 defence initiative for longer than expected. The Armed Forces of Malta are also very active in the Canale exercise, an Italo-Maltese aero-maritime exercise organized under the aegis of the defence initiative. These activities are another example of Malta's commitment to security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region through exchange of information, expertise and interoperability by means of the defence initiative.

Malta considers the United Nations and its treaty bodies to be a tool towards providing global security and stability, especially those that provide arms control mechanisms relating to weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. Hence, Malta is a party to the major international non-proliferation instruments and implements all effective and necessary control measures aimed at preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery and related materials, including the adoption of legislative measures and the enforcement of appropriate sanctions for the violation of such measures. Malta works in concert with its fellow States members of the European Union to further its own non-proliferation goals and those of the Union.

Malta supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the implementation of confidence-building measures worldwide, in particular in the Mediterranean region. It supports concrete and practical measures for the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which the parties called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Malta participated in the seminars organized by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium that took place in July 2011 and November 2012.

From a more technical point of view, Malta submits reports according to the seven categories of the reporting forms of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, on small arms and light weapons. Further to General Assembly resolution 64/22, Malta submits its military expenditure reports using the standardized United Nations reporting forms, which include data and information relating to the expenditure incurred on personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and construction, as well as research and development. In this regard, it promotes a policy of openness and transparency in military matters. Malta is continuously supportive of the United Nations efforts to restrict the proliferation of weapons and to encourage arms control and disarmament, with special emphasis on weapons of mass destruction.

Netherlands

[Original: English]
[31 May 2013]

At its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/75, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

The following is in response to the request of the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat for the view of the Government of the Netherlands on the issues covered by the resolution for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

The Netherlands, like other States members of the European Union, believes that European security is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The Netherlands takes its responsibility bilaterally through the European Union and through other multilateral forums by playing a role in international efforts to enhance peace and security in the Mediterranean region.

Security and stability in the Mediterranean region also contributes to the alleviation of tensions beyond the region. The Netherlands calls on all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to accede to all multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to strengthen peace and security.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2013]

For historical and geographical reasons, the Mediterranean region has always been a priority for Spain in all respects.

As indicated in the Spanish Security Strategy, adopted in 2011, "the peace and prosperity of the southern Mediterranean are essential to our security and to the security of Europe as a whole. Through their relationship with these countries, ... Spain and the European Union will contribute to their democratic, economic and social development, in accordance with the needs and expectations of their inhabitants, in the belief that such development will foster peace and security in the land that we share".

The National Defence Directive of 31 July 2012 is a strategy document that sets out the most significant issues from an international perspective; these include, inter alia, the emergence of new world powers and the strengthening of existing ones, the global financial and economic crisis, unrest in the Mediterranean, instability in the Sahel, nuclear proliferation and piracy. The Mediterranean region therefore requires a framework for ongoing action and decision-making with a view to the development of a defence policy at this time of extraordinary intensity.

Spain's defence policy for the Mediterranean region is in line with the general action strategy and guidelines for its current defence policy document, which states that, given its strategic location, Spain must ensure the consolidation of a secure environment, particularly in the Mediterranean region, taking into account the fact that stability in the Mediterranean basin will only be achieved if adequate progress is made in its surrounding regions, namely, the Middle East and the Sahel:

- It complies rigorously with international law;
- It is a policy with a strong multilateral focus that was developed within the framework of various initiatives and organizations with which Spain is involved: the Mediterranean Dialogue within the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO); the Union for the Mediterranean[1] within the European Union; the activities carried out with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and the Five plus Five initiative, in which Spain, together with nine other countries from both sides of the Mediterranean, participates. In all these multilateral forums, Spain has consistently demonstrated an active and highly committed policy in terms of its relevant roles in the Mediterranean region;

– In addition to this multilateral focus, Spain supports all security and defence initiatives that facilitate dialogue and promote bilateral cooperation among countries in the Mediterranean region, especially through defence diplomacy.

This is a policy that reflects a high level of commitment, as our presence in the eastern Mediterranean testifies. In Lebanon, as part of the complex mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), some 600 Spanish troops are working for global stability in a specific area with many implications not only for the surrounding Middle East region, but for the entire world.

Spain's defence policy seeks to build trust through cooperation, proposes lines of action and objectives for the international community and plays a role in conflict resolution. This responsibility is not shouldered solely by a single ministry; it is based on a multidisciplinary approach and coordinated action by all the relevant public agencies, coupled with the combined efforts of civilians and the military and of public and private entities.

The failure to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the primary causes of instability in the Mediterranean region and constitutes a serious obstacle to cooperation in that region. It is therefore a priority of Spain in its activities abroad to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the international community's consensus on the urgent need to adopt and implement without delay the solution of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Spain believes that such a solution must be accompanied by the forging of peace between Israel and its other Arab neighbours and of a new relationship between Israelis and the Arab and Muslim world. Working together with other members of the European Union and with the Quartet,[2] as well as the Arab States, Spain will spare no effort in striving towards that objective. It is crucial to bring about the resumption of the political process between the parties, thus helping to build mutual trust, and to avoid a crisis or anything that could reverse the progress made thus far, such as settlement expansion or further outbreaks of violence in Gaza. Spain will continue to support a solution based on international law and the mutual agreement of both parties.

However, it cannot be denied that the Mediterranean is a region of highly complex and diverse social, religious, economic and value systems; therefore, the greatest challenge is to find or develop strategies that foster integration and

[1] The Union for the Mediterranean is a cooperation forum that was established on 13 July 2008, at the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, in order promote progress on peace processes and stability in the Mediterranean region. It comprises 43 countries representing more than 750 million citizens of countries on the Mediterranean coast and countries of the European Union. Its goal is to foster cooperation on specific development projects in order to encourage regional integration.

[2] The members of the Middle East Quartet are the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations.

cooperation. No further evidence of this is needed than the recent events in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, which have resulted in the death of innocent civilians and changes in Government or armed interventions in order to ensure the protection of the population and respect for human rights.

There are, moreover, significant differences in perceptions, including with regard to security and defence. The establishment of a system of measures to foster trust and security among the Mediterranean countries could thus prove crucial. A system of demonstrated effectiveness, such as that which already exists within OSCE, could be a good starting point if adapted to the Mediterranean context.

The system could be based on a Mediterranean security charter in which the geographical region of the Mediterranean would be considered an integral security area. The charter would include a series of measures to foster trust and security, a code of good conduct for Mediterranean countries and a mechanism for exchanging information which would allow Mediterranean countries to better coordinate their individual security agendas.

The measures to be promoted in order to foster mutual trust, and thus to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, include the following:

- Increased cooperation in meeting global security challenges such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, organized crime, mass population movements and drug trafficking;
- Establishment of mechanisms for consultation and exchange of military information;
- Cooperation in establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- Promotion of the signing and ratification and upholding the objectives of international treaties and agreements on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation;
- Promotion of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
- Strengthening of cooperation and integration among Mediterranean countries and furthering of their contribution to peacekeeping operations, especially those linked to the Mediterranean region;
- Reinforcement of cooperation and assistance programmes in the area of security and defence and promotion of exchanges of military units and observers in exercises, training, visits to military units and General Staff meetings;
- Expansion and strengthening of mechanisms for the provision of armed forces support to civilian authorities in the event of an emergency or disaster;
- Continuation of the efforts of the Five plus Five Defence College (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, plus France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain). The Ministerial Declaration of Cagliari of 10 December 2008 marked the official launching of the Five plus Five Defence College, an online

school established to address common security and defence issues in the 10 partner countries and to improve mutual awareness on the part of the countries on both shores of the Western Mediterranean, as well as to facilitate the exchange of experience and networking among the participants. The activities of the College are shared among the member countries each year on a voluntary basis. The working sessions of the third session of Module 1 of the Advanced Course of the Five plus Five Defence College, organized by the School of Advanced Defence Studies (EALEDE), were held from 10 to 14 December 2012 with the participation of 22 officials (generals, colonels and navy captains) from Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Spain. Spain will hold the presidency of the Five plus Five defence initiative (on a rotating basis) in 2014;

– Strengthening of cooperation programmes on maritime security and the control of maritime traffic;

– Continuation of the international seminars on security and defence in the Mediterranean, which have been held annually in Barcelona since 2002, with a view to contributing to the political and academic debate on security and defence in the Mediterranean;

– Promotion of activities that lead to greater transparency in defence planning and in national budget control processes;

– Promotion of activities to foster democratic oversight of national defence and national security forces.